

# HIGH LIGHTS ON MOTION PICTURES NEWS AND GOSSIP OF THE STAGE

## The New Movies

By  
ROBERT E. SHERWOOD.

THE gold medal offered by Photoplay Magazine for the best motion picture of the year has been awarded to "Tolable David." The award was not made by a group of selected judges, but by the readers of the magazine, who expressed their preference by means of votes.

It seems to us an eminently satisfactory choice. Following the selection of "Humoresque," which was the first winner of the medal, it indicates that this prize will become a worthy award—the Davis Cup of the movies. The producer who wins it each year will have something that he may well be proud of.

"Tolable David," indeed, must rate as one of the best pictures in the brief but turbulent history of the silent drama. Its chief claim to distinction was its simplicity. It was not constructed upon a stupendous scale. It relied upon a comparatively small number of persons for its dramatic strength, and it was a homely story. To gain its ends it traveled the most direct route.

Sometimes, perhaps, there will be a Hall of Film Fame. Probably when that is opened the movies will have progressed so far beyond their present standing that none of the pictures which have been produced before now will deserve a place in the archives of posterity.

It seems to us, however, that there already have been pictures with legitimate claims to greatness. Were we called upon to submit a list of nominations to the Admissions Committee at the Hall of Fame we should propose the following:

"The Birth of a Nation,"  
"Intolerance,"  
"The Coward,"  
"Shoulder Arms,"  
"Broken Blossoms,"  
"The Miracle Man,"  
"The Mark of Zorro,"  
"The Kid,"  
"The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,"  
"The Three Musketeers,"  
"Tolable David,"  
"Nanook of the North,"  
"Grandma's Boy,"  
"Over the Hills and Far Away,"  
"Robin Hood."

Of the fourteen photoplays on this list four are Griffith productions, three Douglas Fairbanks, two Chaplin, one Rex Ingram, one George Loane Tuckwell, one Richard Barthelmess and Henry King, one Frank Lloyd, one Harold Lloyd and one Robert J. Flaherty. It is not a large representation and one wonders at the absence of such names as Mary Pickford, Norma Talmadge, William S. Hart and many others which are accustomed to glare forth in the electric lights.

It is our list, however, and we shall stick to it. Most of the selections, like "The Birth of a Nation," "The Miracle Man" and "Robin Hood" are obvious, and will not be contested by any large proportion of our readers. There are others, however, which are open to debate. "The Coward" was produced by the old Triangle company, of which George H. Thomas II, Jr. and Mack Sennett formed the three angles. It was a Civil War drama, with Frank Keenan as an old Southern gentleman, and Charles Ray as his lively son. The old man was greatly disappointed in his offspring because the lad refused to fight.

When the Federal troops occupied the family home, the young coward suddenly had an access of heroism, and proceeded to rout them with due dispatch. "The Coward" started Charles Ray off upon his successful career, and he has never done anything so equal to it since.

"Nanook of the North" is another nomination that may be questioned. So far as we are concerned it is one of the first choices.

Robert J. Flaherty, who produced it, did something that had never been done before in the movies—and did it extraordinarily well. Working with no material save a family of Eskimos and an unlimited amount of snow, he concocted a drama of intense and genuine interest. He caught the spirit of the great, cold North, as it has not been caught in any of the numberless photoplays that Rex Beach, James Oliver Curwood and company have written.

Aside from the pictures mentioned in our list, there are a few that ought to be cited as "almosts." There is, for instance, "One Glorious Day," that delightful fantasy in which Will Rogers co-starred with a wandering spirit named "EK." There are also "Victory," from Conrad's novel, "When Knighthood Was in Flower," "Behind the Door," "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," "Humoresque," "Sentimental Tommy," and any number of Chaplin, Lloyd, Keaton and Sennett comedies.

We have studiously avoided mention of the German pictures, because we have not seen enough of them to make a comparative list. But of those that we have seen there are certainly four that deserve to be placed on the first string—"Passion," "Deception," "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" and "The Loves of Pharaoh."

Of these, "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" is the finest. It failed miserably because it was too far ahead of its time. But it established a new dimension on the screen—it gave the movies an emotional depth that they had never possessed before.

Above all things it must be a motion picture which possesses an identity. It must have beauty—of photoplay composition, background and lighting.

It must have drama, which means that it must be able to strike beyond the optic nerve.

It must not be dull.

It must be intelligent.

Above all things it must be a motion picture which possesses an identity of its own, and is not merely a photographic imitation of a play or a book.

The only difficulty lies in finding a sufficient number of people who can

## Faces in Current Offerings on the Screen



ALICE BRADY and DAVID POWELL in "ANNA ASCENDS" at RIALTO THEATRE.



HELEN CHADWICK in "BROTHERS UNDER THE SKIN" at CAPITOL.



VIRGINIA VALLI in "THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH" at 44th STREET THEATRE.



MARY PICKFORD in "TESS OF THE STORM COUNTRY" at STRAND.

### Pictures of the Week.

APOLLO—"One Exciting Night," directed by D. W. Griffith, with Carol Dempster and Henry Hull.

ASTOR—"The Town That Forgot God," directed by Harry Millarde.

CAMEO—"When the Desert Calls," with Violet Heming.

CAPITOL—"Brothers Under the Skin," directed by E. Mason Hopper.

CRITERION—"When Knighthood Was in Flower," directed by Robert Vignola, with Marion Davies.

FORTY-FOURTH STREET—"The Village Blacksmith," directed by Jack Ford.

LYRIC—"Douglas Fairbanks in 'Robin Hood,' directed by Allan Dwan.

RIALTO—"Anna Ascends," directed by Victor Fleming, with Alice Brady.

RIVOLI—"The Young Rajah," directed by Philip Rosen, with Rodolph Valentino.

STRAND—"Mary Pickford in 'Tess of the Storm Country,' directed by John S. Robertson.

Hood comes "Robbed 'Em Good" and "Robin Hood, Junior."

With one or two exceptions the burlesque movies that we have seen have been woefully unfunny.

There are two more Sherlock Holmes pictures going the rounds, "The Tiger of San Pedro" and "The Priory School," both of them short subjects in the series that is being released by Educational.

A new Madge Kennedy picture, "The Purple Highway," will probably come to town late this month. Miss Kennedy has not been seen on local screens for a long time, and if you ask us, she has been missed.

Rodolph Valentino and his wife will execute the Tango at the Equity ball on November 13.

Douglas MacLean has joined the Associated Exhibitors for purposes of distribution, but he will have complete charge of production himself. Lloyd Ingraham will be his director.

It has been rumored that "The Town That Forgot God," the Fox film which is now at the Astor, is in reality an exposé of conditions in Fort Lee, New Jersey, where the picture was made. This is stoutly denied at Fox.

We expect soon to receive a similar statement from the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce.

It is probable that the election of Smith will mean the end of motion picture censorship in this State, and most of the film men are rejoicing.

Well—Al's well that ends well.

"GIVE AND TAKE," an impending play by Aaron Hoffman, has made two Sams grow where only one grew before. The piece was destined originally for Sam Bernard and Louis Mann, as might have been guessed from the title. But after "Friendly Enemies," which Hoffman also wrote for them, they managed to act without each other. Now it is to be done by Sam Mann (no relation) and Sam Sidi-man, who comes from vaudeville, and it will probably be Max Marcini's next challenge to the electorate in the production field.

Lucille La Verne has been engaged for the leading role of "Sun-Up," a new play by Lulu Volmer, which Lee Kugel is aiming to bring into New York as soon as some current attraction is willing to give up the ghost. This is said to be a picture of colored life, over and above the prima face

evidence that it is cast in words of one syllable and Miss La Verne is in it.

Marguerite Sylva, who has been nursing an ambition to act on the stage which had a fleeting chance of fulfillment in "The Stylers," is to appear in a dramatization of Julian Street's story, "Rita Coventry," which dealt with a prima donna and served the usual stage apprenticeship on the Saturday Evening Post.

The music program prepared by Director Hugo Riesenfeld for the Rialto next week will have four features. The orchestral features will be Liszt's "First Hungarian Rhapsody," with Bela Nyary, cymbalom virtuoso, as soloist at the Hungarian instrument, and a special orchestration of a fox trot as the "Classical Jazz" selection. Mr. Riesenfeld and Joseph Littau will be the conductors. Emma Noe, soprano, will sing "Gloria Mia," from Primi's "The Firefly," and Frank Stewart Adams, concert organist at the Rialto, will present a novelty for screen and the Wurlitzer organ as an additional musical number.

The musical program arranged by S. L. Rothafel at the Capitol next week has Bernard Olanovsky, larytone, as the principal soloist. Mr. Olanovsky was for two seasons one of the leading barytones of the original Boston Opera Company, but has lately been devoting his time to concert recitals, some in association with Emmy Destinn and Claudia Muzio. He will sing Massenet's "Elegie" and the "Volga Boat Song." A novelty will be the first appearance in America of Mlle. Irma Caron, French-Australian singer, in an original Maori song, "Waiaia Poi" by Alfred Hill. She will be assisted by Doris Niles, Thalia Zanon, Ellen Lerches and Zena Larina. There will be a special presentation for the official navy film, "Rolling Down to Rio With Secretary Hughes," in which the Capitol ballet corps will be seen in an elaborate transcription of the "Sailor's Hornpipe," and Douglas Stanbury, assisted by a male ensemble, will sing "Rolling Down to Rio" by Edward German. Mlle. Gambaelli and Alexander Oumansky will dance a gavotte arranged to "Cupid's Conquest" by Kahn, for which Betty Ayres will sing a lyrical interpretation. The orchestra, conducted by Erno Rapee, will play Tchaikovsky's "Capriccio Italien."

Managing Director Joseph Plummett will supplement the Strand program with the fourth offering of the Fokine ballet corps. The recently completed Fokine dance composition, "The Adventures of Harlequin," will be given its premiere presentation with the Pickford film. Michel Fokine has conceived this new work from the music by Beethoven, and again Boris M. Artyushanoff, son of the noted actor, carried out its theme by designing special settings and costumes.

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The Strand orchestra, under the baton of Carl Eduard, will play the overture from "Mignon" by Thomas.

The music program at the Rivoli introduces "The Young Rajah," with an atmospheric stage number in which Miriam Lax and Marie Epton, soprano; Inga Wank, mezzo soprano, and Adrian da Silva, tenor, sing Rimsky-Korsakov's "Song of India." The orchestral feature of the program is Gómes's "Il Guarany" overture, played by the Rivoli orchestra, Frederick Stahlberg and Emanuel Baer conducting.

### A Foreword to

### Barymore's "Hamlet"

SOME years ago Mark Twain wrote a book which he called "Is Shakespeare Dead?" The answer—at least from Arthur Hopkins—is, "No!" All indications point to the fact that the Bard's bones may rest in the peace he begged for them, but that his soul goes marching on.

Thursday evening Mr. Hopkins will present John Barymore in "Hamlet" at the Sam H. Harris Theater, and thus add a new living chapter to a history of the play in America which demonstrates the longevity of the genial guest of the Mermad Tavern centuries after he had become a guest of the unknown.

That history in this metropolis dates back to November 26, 1761, when New York proved that Shakespeare wasn't dead by presenting the first American production of "Hamlet" at David Douglass's Theater, on the southeast corner of Nassau and Chatham streets.

One Lewis Hallam played the role of the melancholy Dane and a Mrs. Morris the unfortunate Ophelia. The theater in which this historical theatrical event took place was one of the first, of course, to be built in New York. It cost \$1,625 to build and could play to a capacity of 5450.

The most famous Hamlet by an American was that of Edwin Booth. The celebrated actor played the role at the New Fifth Avenue Theater on October 25, 1875, with Jeffries Lewis as Ophelia and Maurice Barrymore, John's father, as Laertes. The New Fifth Avenue Theater was at the corner of Twenty-eighth street and had a seating capacity of 1500.

Years later, on April 20, 1886, Booth again revived the classic tragedy. This was at the Academy of Music, and Tommaso Salvini played the Ghost. The Italian actor's selection of the part of the Ghost was a disappointment to Booth, who considered King Claudius a better role and thought that Salvini did himself an injustice by not playing it.

Another notable performance of Hamlet by Booth was in 1888, when he played at the Broadway Theater, with Mme. Modjeska as Ophelia and Orla Skinner as Laertes.

Salvini himself portrayed Hamlet and appropriates of his interpretation William Winter wrote a famous bit of criticism which is worth repeating. He said of Salvini's work:

"His most conspicuous defect was animalism—an attribute that made his performance of Hamlet a desecration. The Prince of Denmark is the somber, grief-stricken, mournful, wavering hero of poetic tragedy—a being of spiritual intelligence, of feminine weakness, of imaginative reason, of lovable temperament, tear freighted humor, princely grace of condition, brooding melancholy, the philosophic mind and the deep heart. He seems so widely and understands so obviously the nature of things in the universe that his sense of moral responsibility is overwhelmed and his power of action arrested. He wanders dully in the borderland betwixt reason and madness—haunted now by sweet strains and majestic images of heaven."

now by vague, terrific shapes of hell, and so pitiless and forlorn, he drifts upon a sea of misery to vanish in the merciful oblivion of death."

### THE SUBWAY CIRCUIT.

MAJESTIC THEATER, BROOKLYN.

"The Monster," with Emmett Corrigan.

MONTEAUX THEATER—Otis Skinner in "Dieter Antonia."

TELLER'S SHUBERT THEATER—"The Huckleb."

SHUBERT—RIVIERA THEATER, MANHATTAN—"The Hotel Mouse," with Francis White and Taylor Holmes.

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### Houdini Calls Spirit Messages All Fakes

Boston, Nov. 11.—Morbidity and melancholia induced by interest in psychic phenomena threaten the health and sanity of many persons, Harry Houdini, president of the Society of American Magicians, declared at the annual dinner of the society here. He spoke of his twenty-five years' investigation of the subject, and said he had never seen anything to convince him that there had been a single communication from the dead.

"I have never seen any of the mediums or spiritualists do anything or produce a single effect which I could not, through my knowledge of magic, account for or duplicate," he asserted. "I have had nine pacts with the dead who while alive agreed with me to try to communicate with me from beyond, but each has been fruitless."

He said he had worked with Sir Oliver Lodge and other scientists engaged in the study of psychic phenomena and respected them.

"But," he added, "when I demonstrate to them the secrets and reveal the methods used by mediums and they tell me that I too am a medium, in spite of

myself, I am forced to conclude that they merely do not know."

"I have seen people who previous to the war never concerned themselves with things psychic now diving into it to the point of hysteria. It is conducive of morbidity, brooding and melancholia. It becomes an obsession very quickly and I would warn against it. It is threatening the health and sanity of those who indulge in it."

### Siberians Must Join Church or be Exiled

VLADIVOSTOK, Siberia, Nov. 11.—The Government, in ordering all persons in the Primorye area to register in the church communities to which they belong or leave the country, proposes to establish government of priests and parish communities.

All civil authority will be handed over to the church community of each district, which will appoint its own executive council. Members of the church community who do not attend meetings of their church are liable to fines amounting to 25 rubles gold and to expulsion. The decision of the executive council of the church is subject to the approval of the governor of the district.

The order has aroused the derision of the public, and the priest is hailed as the "civil governor." The one means of self-expression left to the peasant and the villagers has been their zemstvos. These institutions were semi-official in the reign of the Czar, and although some of the members of the zemstvos were elected by the vote of the peasants the organization in itself was an official one.

After the revolution the zemstvo board became a purely political machine consisting largely of social revolutionists. It was a formidable enemy during the dictatorship of Admiral Kolchak. In order to do away with its menace the present dictator has evolved the church plan of local self-government.

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